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Written Testimony for the
Transportation Committee
from
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Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges
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Registration of Low Speed Neighborhood Electric Vehicles
Proposed Bill Nos. 5662, 739, 699

On behalf of the member institutions of the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges (CCIC), *I am submitting testimony in support of a bill to allow registration of low speed neighborhood electric vehicles.* The various bills proposed on this subject provide for registration and equipment standards for neighborhood electric vehicles and permit their operation on certain roadways in Connecticut.

Neighborhood electric vehicles have been a boon to college campuses across the country. Used most often for maintenance, facilities or security activities, they allow campuses to reduce significantly the cost and energy consumption of fleet vehicles. They are clean and quiet making them the perfect vehicles for our campuses and our host communities.

Originally created as an alternative to gasoline-powered automobiles for short trips on public roadways with speed limits of 35 mph or less, they are tailor made for use on corporate, academic, and military campuses. **They have lower maintenance costs than full-sized vehicles, no emissions, and can be operated on narrow campus roads and paths.** Some campuses even use them inside buildings.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the vehicles are included in a classification of federally approved "low speed vehicles" which may now be driven on community streets if they meet certain safety criteria. They come with anchored 3-point seat belts, headlights and windshield wipers as standard equipment along with four-wheel hydraulic brakes, rack and pinion steering, safety-glass windshields, front-wheel drive, tail lights, front and rear turn signals and brake lights.

Currently about 40 states allow these vehicles to be registered and to drive on area streets. Generally, they are allowed on streets with a posted speed limit of 35 mph or less. New York, California, New Hampshire, Maine, Florida and Vermont are a sample of the states that currently allow these vehicles. In both California and New York, college campuses have embraced them and have often developed partnerships with their area energy companies as a way of reducing emissions on campus.

We urge your adoption of such a bill and recommend the attached language, which tracks that used in many other states.

Albertus Magnus College, Connecticut College, Fairfield University, Goodwin College, Mitchell College, Quinnipiac University, Rensselaer at Hartford, Sacred Heart University, Saint Joseph College, St. Vincent's College, Trinity College, University of Bridgeport, University of Hartford, University of New Haven, Wesleyan University, Yale University



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Proposed Language

AN ACT CONCERNING REGISTRATION AND USE OF CERTAIN LOW SPEED NEIGHBORHOOD VEHICLES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Subsection (a) of section 14-1 of the general statutes is amended by adding subdivision (99) as follows:

(NEW) (99) "Neighborhood electric vehicle" means a four-wheel, self-propelled, electrically-powered motor vehicle that conforms with the definition and standards adopted for low speed vehicles by the National Highway Safety and Traffic Administration, in accordance with 49 CFR 571, as amended from time to time.

Sec. 2. (NEW) (a) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles may, on application in accordance with the provisions of section 14-12 of the general statutes and subject to the financial responsibility provisions of section 14-112 of the general statutes, issue a certificate of registration and marker plates to the owner or lessee of a neighborhood electric vehicle. The applicant shall pay the fee required under subsection (f) of section 14-49 of the general statutes. Such owner or lessee shall carry such registration and proof of financial responsibility in the vehicle and display marker plates as required by section 14-18 of the general statutes. The commissioner shall issue a certificate of title, pursuant to the provisions of chapter 247 of the general statutes, for each vehicle that has been issued a manufacturer's or importer's certificate of origin and vehicle identification number.

(b) No individual may operate a neighborhood electric vehicle unless (1) the individual carries a valid motor vehicle operator's license or learner's permit, (2) a certificate of registration and automobile insurance identification card for the vehicle are carried in the motor vehicle and marker plates are displayed in accordance with the provisions of section 14-18 of the general statutes, and (3) such vehicle is equipped in accordance with the requirements of sections 14-80 to 14-106c, inclusive, of the general statutes, except insofar as any requirement of said sections is inapplicable to or inconsistent with the design and equipment standards for low speed vehicles, as adopted by the National Highway Safety Traffic Administration in accordance with 49 CFR 571.000, as amended from time to time.

(c) A neighborhood electric vehicle may be operated on a highway only if such highway has an established speed limit of no more than thirty-five miles per hour, except that the traffic authority of any municipality may limit or prohibit the operation of neighborhood electric vehicles on any highway under the jurisdiction of such local traffic authority.